

## Harry SIMS

My father was born on the 3rd of December 1876 at Clanfield. His father William registered him in the district of Catherington Horndean, in the County of Southampton on 12th January 1877. recorded his mark X. All I know of his mother is her name Louisa nee Horn. She died in the early 1920's. having outlived William, and spending some of her last years as a housekeeper in private service.

Harry always insisted he was born in Hambledon, the birth place of cricket.

He was the eldest of six children. Laura was the second born then came four boys. Leonard, Louis, Walter and. Frank.

William, the father, was, I understand, a coachman, and looked after the horses. According to my mother, he liked his drink but probably that was his only recreation.

The little I know of Harry's <sup>childhood</sup> has come <sup>from my Nod</sup> hearsay, from Aunt Laura. He was the survivor of twins, and slow to walk. Aunt Laura had often to rescue <sup>him</sup> from among the horses altho she was a year, at least, younger than him. He remained small never growing taller than about 5ft.

He must have enjoyed his schooling as <sup>he</sup> could write a very good letter, spell well, and know his arithmetick.

On March 1st 1891, at the age of 13 years he was apprenticed as a jockey & trainer, to William Walter of Pimperne Dorset, from whom he received his board & lodgings. His salary

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the 1ST YEAR was 5, Five Pounds  
2nd year .. 6. Six Pounds.  
3rd Year .. 7. Seven Pounds  
4th Year .. 8 Eight Pound,  
5th Year .. 9 Nine Pounds.

He had to supply his own clothing and washing. The indenture is signed By Harry, his father William Walters, and E. H Pollock, Solicitor of Hambledon Hants.

Thereafter, I only know he worked at Bramdean Hants, where he met Maude Harris, who held a position as housemaid at the house of his employer.

He was a bit of a dandy, spent his money on tailormade suits and was proud of his small feet, as had to have his boots made to measure. He always talked of winning two races, and getting the princely sum of five <sup>shillings</sup> ~~pounds~~ for his effort.

In 1914 he became engaged to Maude but the Great War commenced, so he joined the forces and was assigned to a remount depot. He kept a diary through most of the war; the diary is now in the hands of William TURNBULL, his grandson. On leaves, he came to London, usually staying at Maude's Aunt Annie, who resided in some Mews cottage in Paddington. Frank Sims, his youngest brother, was often with him, and they had some good parties sing songs etc and enjoyed the London theatres. On Nov 18th 1918. Harry and Maude were

Of the three children William  
was born at Guy's Hospital in 1920 Feb 24th  
- Grace was born at home - Harry, because  
of his troubles a little late in getting  
the midwife. Peter was born at home  
48 months later.

married at Holy Trinity Church Paddington. Maude in a blue costume (suit), her cousin Selina, bridesmaid, in white, Harry, and his best man, Frank, in uniform.

Harry had to return to France, to help bring the Remount Depot back to England and Maude returned to her job for a while.

As a receptionist cum Parlourmaid to Dr's in Brooke St, London, her employer's wedding present was a Chelsea Blue dinner service.

Harry returned from France, secured of a good job as Stable manager with his old Colonel. Hankey of Hardenhuish, Wilts. A nice house, on the estate, went with the job. It was a prestige position, although poorly paid. But the perks made up for that. The house was rent free. Vegetables were free from the estate garden. The groceries came free from the stores supplying the stables, as

Harry had carte blanche in ordering feed, etc. The butler and housekeeper also worked under the same system, poor wages, but perks - the butler's best one was the wine bill.

Harry's only trouble at this period was his haemorrhoids. He had ~~an~~ haemorrhectomy about 1921. Soon after his daughter Grace was born.

1923 the bottom fell out of the coxy world. Colonel Hankey lost a great deal of his money in Argentina Railways. So the estate was sold.

Harry managed to obtain a 2up, 2 down terrace cottage, with water tap, a bucket toilet, outside, at Horton, Buckinghamshire.

He obtained work with a Miss Sheila Beddington, who hunted first with a Hampshire Hunt then with the Quorn Hunt. The horses, 3 big hunters, were kept in the Manor House Stables at Horton during the summer, and Harry looked after them for a nominal fee, that entailed exercising them at daylight-AM. having another job, whatever he could get, once it was looking after tomato plants in a large greenhouse complex near Colnbrook, then bedding the horses, and grooming them at night.

With Maude's careful management the family were fed and clothed, but life wasn't easy. In the winter Harry took the horses to the district where the hunting was, and had to board himself, and send enough money home for the family to subsist. To do this he couldn't afford to come home himself, and had to severely ration his own drinking and entertainment, if any.

1931, was another crisis. Miss Beddington married, so gave up her horses. Harry obtained a position as groom for 4 horses with Miss Dorothy Blacklock of East Haddon Northampton. So on 21st Dec 1931, the shortest day of the year, the family and possessions, were packed into a bus, hired for the day, and taken up to East Haddon. To Priestly Cottage. unseen by ~~my~~ Maude Harry had bought the curtains from the previous

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residents. The cottage was three bed roomed with sitting room, ~~parlour~~, 2 parlours a large kitchen a large scullery in which the bath was situated, and a coal shed. The bucket toilet was across the yard. By hearsay it sounded a palace to what Maude has been residing in but it was old, Thatched roof stone floors & damp, and the curtains were just pieces of material on sticks across the windows. Harry still had long hours up at daylight, to either exercise the horses or take them to the Hunt meeting also he had to do the garden, and any odd jobs about the house all for Two Pounds Ten shillings a week. The house was rent free. Now fifty six years of age he had to learn to drive Miss Blacklock's Rover car. and when necessary, take it up to London, to her flat. He never learnt to like the car.

During his years at East Haddon he would go into the Plough Inn for his pint of beer, only one, and was well liked by the proprietress Mrs Jones. but he could never be persuaded to join in the village events such as the whist drives.

One of his duties was to look after the Cairn Terriers belonging to Miss Blacklock, but that duty was relegated to the family, who loved doing it. He had no time for the dogs or the family cat.

In 1935 the family had another move, this time, just across the road to

Lilac Cottage. It had originally been two cottages but when Miss Blacklock bought it was renovated to one. A cosier place ~~also~~ altogether - a water closet in the out-house laundry, and a bath in the kitchen, a lid over it turning it into a side board when not in use.

1936. Another crisis, the horses returned home from exercising but not Harry. He was found wandering along the road near Guildborough suffering from concussion.

He always wore a bowler hat, black, when riding. Miss Blacklock did supply him with breeches and black coat for the hunting field. Summer & Winter - Rain, hail, snow, the horses had to be exercised. In winter he was often out all day with the hunt, afterwards having to walk the horses home, and in summer there was the garden to be done.

1938, Threat of war - a proud Englishman, proud of the empire, always voted Tony - who else could rule the country. And "Niggers" were something not associated with England, they inhabited countries ruled over by Englishmen. Colonials were alright but not exactly gentlemen. The royal family were to be honoured even tho' he often heard Edward Prince of Wales, and the little princesses let out swear words on the hunting fields, words never allowed in his home.

Like many of his age group, sent to be slaughtered on the battle fields of the first

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world war, he still revered the men responsible. Every Armistice Day, November 11th., he donned his medals, and marched to the cenotaph. The Empire was a thing to be proud of, — the German race respected for their courage, the French despised for lack of it. Class was not to be disputed — one said 'Sir or Madam' to the upper class, and deferred to them.

Harry rushed to help defend his country. (His eldest son, William, was already in the Royal Navy), an acting Engineer room artificer. At the age of 62 years he was relegated to 'Dad's Army' then the Observer Corp. By 1939, the outbreak of war, he was taking his turn of duty, sitting in the spotting hut in a field on the highest spot of the parish of East Haddon, watching for enemy planes. Plenty came over when Coventry was bombed but nothing could be done but to watch them return again and again to send their bombs down on to Coventry, a town surrounded by former car factories converted to war production, Coventry had been considered a evacuation area so no anti aircraft guns were situated anywhere around. One German airplane did land in fields of East Haddon. The pilot surrendering to the Home Guard, without incidence. A Spitfire also made a false landing. Both planes were guarded by the local Home Guard so the whole village populace clamoured around them. A rumour promptly curtailed when the regular army arrived.



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Harry's youngest son, Peter, was now drilling in the Home Guard, with broomsticks as weapons. Bill was assigned to HMS. Hood.

1941. Empire Day. May. Still cold enough to enjoy sitting around the fire to listen to the 6pm news. Grace and her friend Joan, were upstairs putting on dresses etc to go to the local dance due to start at 7pm. Suddenly Peter burst in the room. The news announcer had just stated the 'Hood' was sunk, with all hands missing. Joan went home, the family sat around, wondering, disbelieving, neighbours called... A week later the official telegram arrived. The family were devastated.

Miss Blacklock had, by this time sold her horses, and house in East Haddon. She allowed Harry to live in 'Elbow Cottage' rent free, and he was on the Government pension. Harry was very restless and decided to remove from East Haddon. He ~~obtained a post as gardener, odd job man.~~ Miss Blacklock offered him the job as caretaker at her house in Camberley, Surrey. He took it, but, for a while, Claude went down to South Molton, Devon, to stay with Aunt Annie.

Later she joined Harry then they moved to another part of Camberley where a job as chauffeur, gardener offered a flat over the garage. In Camberley Harry joined the Home Guard. On exercises one night the officer criticised him because he didn't

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climb a tree, as an advantage point to waylay the enemy. He pointed out that he was more likely to survive staying on the ground, than climbing trees at 67 yrs of age. Sometime later another foot as odd job man was taken at Chobham a cottage came with the job rent free. At this job he also helped in the house as all man power was directed to the war effort. He was still riding a bike everywhere, going to the local library to get his supply of 'Western' books to read.

The war ended, and some building was allowed. A small estate of semi detached houses was built in Trimley, Surrey. Miss Blacklock took one and bought another further along 'The Grove' for Harry & Maud. They lived there rent free on their pension, but looked after Miss Blacklock when she came to her house. Went up to her London flat in William's St. Knightbridge, when she couldn't get maids to live in, which was pretty often, and kept the gardens going.

Harry went for his pint of beer every Sunday morning to the 'Wheat sheaf'. His especial croney was the Postman, and between them, the village gossip flourished. The first house on the postman's round was Harry's, where he had a cup of tea. Maud could not come downstairs until the postman had departed, but she didn't have to do so as Harry always considered it his duty to give everyone morning tea in bed, and clean the family shoes. One always knew when he was

cleaning shoes, brass, silver. He would "brush" thro' his teeth a habit carried over from when he groomed the horses.

For the first time in his life he was his own master. He still did odd jobs, cleaning silver etc for people. At one time he took on cleaning a house for an old couple much to the amusement of his family. He cycled everywhere, into Camberley, to the library, and to the shops. In the summer he'd walk along to the Grove, sit on the seat, and chat to anyone who came along.

He enjoyed going up to London occasionally to visit his son Peter, and the grandchildren, but could never be persuaded to stay for a long period.

When his daughter Grace, returned from Australia, he was a regular worker to her house in Camberley, on the cycle. He'd have a cup of tea, his visit usually coincided with the time the children came home from school. so it would be "hallo, & back home."

When Grace was hospitalised, for a knee operation, he discovered the housekeeper looking after the children was an avid horse race follower, so he visited every day, to discuss the horses.

Peter obtained a Television set black & white, for his parents. Harry enjoyed the news but never expressed any liking for the other programmes. Until they went to school

Grace would bring her children down every Wednesday for afternoon tea. The programme "Bill & Ben the flowerpot men" came on about 4.30pm. They'd stay to see that then Harry would accompany them down to the village to catch the bus back to Camberley.

One Wednesday as the bus was moving off Grace was horrified to see Harry weaving along the road. The conductor refused to stop the bus so she took the children home and, as soon as her husband came home from work rushed back to Frimley, by bus, as there was no car to use. Harry had gone to bed but was indignant at having to get up and open the door. Naude, in London, had been informed by phone, so came down later that night. In the morning Harry was very stubborn, still insisting he felt well, and he seemed alright, so couldn't be prevented from going for his bike ride. Half an hour later a truck driver, who knew him by sight, brought Harry and the bike home. He'd been weaving across the road. He was put to bed. The doctor called, and by nightfall was paralysed on one side. For over a week he was tended by the family. Grace's husband, Alf, going down daily to shave and turn him & lift him into the bath. The doctor told Naude the only way he'd leave the bed was in a push chair. Within the month he was again riding his bike completely.

in charge of all his faculties. In 1953, Alf had been amazed at the way he rode his bike, leaving Alf behind when he was showing him the Vickers Armstrong factory at Weybridge, where Alf obtained a job.

Harry continued to tend his garden but now odd jobs were a thing of the past. He was broken hearted when Maude died of cancer in 1963. His faculties were now failing that he'd given up his cycling. Alf had made sure the bike was sold before he and Grace returned to Australia in 1956.

Maude had always thought, being 12 years younger, that she'd outlive Harry, and Harry's first words after her death, was "why wasn't I taken first".

The home at Trimley had to be given up and he went to live with Peter, who ran a hotel in . but he couldn't settle, and it was decided to send him out to Australia.

196 He sailed on the "Canberra" in evidently enjoying the trip. Still a good figure, tho' he never grew tall, he didn't put on weight, or wrinkle. He was popular with all the ladies on board, and they took an interest in him. His only complaint was when his cabin mate took a girl in, and locked the cabin door. Harry called the steward and stated he was <sup>not</sup> going to have any <sup>heavy papers</sup> ~~papers~~ ~~going~~ in his cabin. On leaving the ship in Melbourne all the ladies lined up to kiss him

goodbye. Postcards received from him, from each port, were worrying as his hand writing had become very scrawly. It had always been neat and well formed.

He survived the hot summer in Melbourne, always refusing to discard his waistcoat, and hating to have lighter underwear. Australia was an alien country and he gradually deteriorated. His greatest joy was his granddaughter Alison. He'd wait, at the gate, for her homecoming from school.

Eventually his condition deteriorated warranted nursing home care.

He died and was cremated at Springvale Cemetery. The Union Jack draping his coffin.

His ashes were sent to England to be placed in Maud's grave.

By some dreadful timing they arrived at Peter's home with the Christmas presents.

### Harry's Family

Femina Laura, who always insisted on being called Laura, became a cook in a private family. She married Robert Elliot, a policeman in the Surrey Constabulary. They had one son Arthur, who died of Meningitis, caught from the camp of Canadian Soldiers stationed at Chant <sup>Sum</sup> Caterham in 1916. He was 14 years old.

Robert retired early, at 45 yrs, on a pension. He suffered a guttre, which slowed his personality.

Laura & Robert spent their retiring years at Brambleden, Yateley. a semi detached house rented from school teachers who lived next door. Robert loved his wheel chases, and fishing, cycling around the district to both Laura was looked up to, as a good housewife, many folks often coming to her for advice. Not very popular with her brothers wives, as she still dominated them.

Harry had left his belongings and bank book with her, on joining up in the 1914-18 war, and she'd used the clothes and money on her son. Harry had probably said she could buy Maude, his wife, was a little bitter about it.

Laurie died, age 88 years, when her heart failed. She'd had cardiac trouble when she was 40 years of age. Robert although a few years younger, did not survive her long.

Leonard was entered into the Royal Navy as a boy. He travelled the world, developed Asthma while serving. On retiring he used his gratuity to buy an <sup>the Royal Oak</sup> farm in Salisbury Wilts. He died before Harry & Laura and was survived by 3 children. James who served in the RAF training at Cranbourne in the 1930's. Peggy who retired to Bristol, and Frank, who was a writer in the Royal Navy retiring to Portsmouth.

Arthur was a family legend. He was killed while sledging one winter being only a boy of ten or twelve years of age.

Louis was a gardener, expert at his trade. He was head gardener at the British Hospital in France for years then at a large estate at Bray near Maidenhead. He died, during the <sup>2nd</sup> war years, at Surbiton, Surrey, where he was acting as caretaker of an estate. He had one daughter Jean.

Walter, became a greengrocer. For years he managed a shop at Banbury, then bought his own in Birmingham. He retired to Minehead. Having his own house and a small orchard. Left a widower, and childless, he willed his property to be shared by all his nieces & nephews.

Frank, was a cook, and worked for years with the firm of Lyons in London. During the 2nd world war he moved to Birmingham, working for his brother Walter, But that didn't work out - the wives disagreed - so he became a cook in a factory canteen. His first wife Connie died, and he remarried a younger woman who by family hearsay, made his retirement a miserable time. The family only learnt of his death by accident. He was childless.

All the brothers were dapper, ~~men~~, very energetic, and prided themselves on their appearances. Harry was the only fair haired one, tending to ginger, the rest including, Louis were dark haired but blue eyed. None of them giants, but all overtopped Harry in height.



Their mother received a telegram of congratulations from King George V after the 1st world war, because all of her sons had joined the forces, served throughout the war and returned alive and uninjured, a very rare thing.

## MAUDE HARRIS. I

Maude was born December 11th 1888 at the Public House, I believe "The Royal Oak", in South Molton, Devon.

The eldest child of Charles William Harris and Elizabeth, nee Carter. Two other children followed. — William Charles and Stanley. Charles & Elizabeth were married at Romansleigh Church by Rev. S. Wade on March 27th 1888. Charles William was a tall, fair man. His family were ghost guards & publicans.

His grandchildren remember him as a firm disciplinarian. He had formerly kept an old public house on the South Molton Rd, near the railway station of that name. Well known, and liked thro' out North Devon, he made his own wines from local fruit, and cider, to sell over the counter. Each was publicised by an appropriate ditty of his own composing.

Maude recited some of these ditties to her daughter when she lay dying but Grace didn't have the wit to record them.

His wife Elizabeth, died aged 48 years of pneumonia, following a fall, due, some say, having alcoholic tendencies. on Aug 18th 1904.

Charles remarried a practical bustling woman who tended him well. When he retired to a property in Washleigh, she aided him to look after the bees, chickens and ducks, making feather beds and pillows from the pluckings of the birds. Each week the plucked birds, eggs and honey were sent to Barnstaple Market.

Matilda died of cancer in the early 1940's. Maude nursed her during her last weeks of life. She had always welcomed Charles children and

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grandchildren when they arrived to spend their August holidays on the property. 'Highdown' was a small bungalow on the top of the hill, overlooking Warbleigh. It comprised three large fields.

Charles had a series of housekeepers after Matilda's death but becoming blind, and crippled with rheumatism, he eventually went to live with his eldest son, William. Operations at Barnstaple Hospital, on his cataracts were unsuccessful. He was a bad patient hating to be tied down.

'Highdown' was sold, and burnt down just prior to the end of the 2nd world war.

Charles lived on, an active mind in a crippled body. In 1947, when Maude at last had an established house, he came to Trimley Surrey. He soon established a reputation as a gardening expert among the villagers — his great joy was listening to the wireless. Gardening and political programmes were his favourites. In 1948 when his granddaughter Frazer, left for Australia, he wept a few tears as he said, "This is the last time I see you" That was October. He died in the December and was buried in Trimley C of E Churchyard far from his beloved Devon. (Dec 23rd 1948 age 84 yrs)

Maude went to a private school in South Molton. She learnt French but was never very good at it and always said she dreaded the examinations. William always said this led to a breakdown. But

at 14 years of age her mother died. She was sent to visit, for a while, her Uncle Dick in Portsmouth. Lottie, her cousin, remembers meeting her at Portsmouth Station, a reserved but composed girl. Lottie's mother had no regard for girls, her three boys were her pride - this was Lottie's view, but it might have been prejudiced as Lottie was the eldest, and expected to stay home from school when her mother was sick, which was often. Uncle Dick was a sailor in the Royal Navy, so away from home for long periods.

Here at Portsmouth Maude first saw the Carter family bible, but had only stolen glimpses of it, the explanation given her that being a girl she should not be interested.

I am not sure if it was before or after this period she was apprenticed to a Milliner in South Molton. but throughout her life she loved dressing hats, and could twist a veil and artificial flower to enhance any hat.

Aunt Annie then took over. She was the youngest Carter, married to a chauffeur, George Ashby. He had trained at the Rolls Royce works to drive the car. They were a childless couple so willingly took Maude under their wing. George was chauffeur to some moneyed family in Sussex. Annie was a great believer in 'Service' for girls - good training. She found positions for both Maude and Lottie.

Maude, Lottie, and Selma, a cousin on

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the Harris side, were companions, though residing as housemaids in different houses. No telephones being available they organised their days off, once a week or month, by postcard. A postcard,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp, dropped in the letter post was certain to reach any destination, in England, the next day.

In 1911, while in 'service' in Devon, somewhere in the Warbleigh vicinity, Maudie and her friend bought bicycles. As she explained to Lottie, on a postcard, it was the only way they could get around. Then started a round of the local dances. At one particular dance they often attended, the toilets were none too clean, so having to walk up a steep hill on the way home, they got into the habit of slipping into a field by a tree. Until, one day, they slipped into the field, to find a 'fattie' waiting under the tree.

Another time, riding back from Warbleigh Maudie thought she heard footsteps following, so she stopped several times, and each time the footsteps stopped. Scared, but determined to find out who was dogging her, she turned back. The pet donkey had followed her from Warbleigh.

Her friend met and married a local farmer. Mr Congram was a typical solid dour Devonian, taciturn but could be extremely witty if persuaded to speak. Mrs Congram & Maudie corresponded and visited, remaining friends for the rest of their lives.

Before 1914 Maudie moved to 'Bramdean' in Surrey. Here she was head housemaid, a prestigious

position, and met Harry Sims, the head groomsmen. From 'Brumdean' it was an easy trip to London, for the theatres etc, always stopping at Aunt Annie Ashley's, who was now residing in a new cottage near Paddington Station. over night or for a cup of tea. Selina & other friend & cousins also converged there and eventually the Sims brothers all considered it a 'home from home'.

1914. Maude and Harry became engaged, but September the war clouds descended. Harry & his brothers all rushed to join up to defend their country. Weddings etc had to be shelved while they did their duty.

Maude moved to London and obtained a position as parlourmaid-receptionist to two London doctors resident in Brooke St. She always recalled the zeppelin raids as, whatever the time, she had to be up to assist the doctors on their way to Guy's Hospital, ready for any emergency.

Theatres were a preferred recreation. There were many good shows but this didn't mean expenditure on a lavish scale. The 'gods', upper circle, hard bench seats, were available for sixpence or threepence, after standing in a queue, essential to get a good position, but under cover alongside the theatre, and for theatre entertainment provided by the buskers. At matinee performances the height of luxury was a dress circle seat, with a tray of tea & cakes served to ones seat during the interval.

1918. Armistice Day Nov 11th. Harry

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came home on leave. He and Maude were married at Holy Trinity Church Paddington. Having a small party afterward at the new cottage of Aunt Annie Ashley.

Harry had to return to France to help repatriate the horses. Demobbed he was able to offer Maude a house in Hardenhuish, Wilts. Here Maude happily set up home. She had a happy knack of making the most of any small thing, creating comfort and elegance out of any materials available.

Early February 1920 Maude went up to stay in Guy's Hospital, London, to be near her Drs who were in charge of her first confinement. She enjoyed her stay there, helping the sisters in many ways.

On Feb 29th William was born, a fairly easy birth and Mother & son returned to Hardenhuish.

Among the friends she made the Matron of Chippenham Hospital became very close. Just before the 2nd child, Grace, was born Matron had Bill reside in her flat at the hospital. Grace was born at home an extended delivery, P.O.P. but the midwife only just got there in time as Harry had to chase around the district after her on his bicycle, a difficult job as his haemorrhoids were bad.

That was July 1921. There was some difficulty getting Bill returned home as the matron had grown very attached to him.

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1921 was a very hot summer, everyone relaxing and enjoying the peace and well-being after the war years.

Peter was born at home on Dec 28th 1923. Maude was enjoying a social life - visits to Chippenham. Teas with the Matron and wives of the shopkeepers etc in Chippenham. The butler's wife also joined in this social group. Bill played often with Colonel Harkey's two sons, who were slightly older than him. Grace was happy as long as she was fed, and Peter was a happy baby.

One day the butler's wife suggested to Maude, over a cup of tea, that living on an estate, it wasn't the "done thing" to have large families. There was the limit, and something would have to be done. Maude was told about "French letters" and through her Harry was initiated. They were not the refined rubber of today, but were obviously effective, as there were no more children.

About 1923 there was a reunion of the ~~Ern's~~ booters. A snap taken at Chippenham Station showed Harry with his children and neeces and nephews, and neighbours children.

It was soon after this time the estate collapsed. Maude and family moved to Horton, Buckinghamshire, and life became a matter of make 'do and trying to retain an aura of respectability under ~~trying~~ <sup>reduced</sup> circumstances.



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The class system, although undermined by the war, was still very evident; and Maudie was not going to sink to a lower grade. She was considered 'proud' by her neighbours, as her economising differed. Margarine was substituted for butter. Margarine was much cheaper. Meat was rare on the menu, but cheese often. The garden was utilised to the full for vegetable growing. Any fruit bought was the cheapest oranges & apples just about to go off, bananas that were browning. Her children were told that was the best time to eat fruit. Biscuits were a treat and usually the broken ones. One sweet a day was allowed, and that a boiled one. But the daily bath before bed work vigorously kept up till the children were older and a wash with weekly bath commenced. This in a cottage where the water was obtained from a single tap outside supplying the 5 cottages and often frozen in the winter.

A gramophone was purchased and, in the evenings, nursery rhymes sung around the fire. Children's A set of Children's Encyclopaedia was a proud possession. Christmas and birthday presents were often books. and the children were encouraged to study.

Maudie became very friendly with her next door neighbour Miss Foster, a single lady who derived her income from sewing and embroidering church banners and similar articles. She also held sewing classes. A member of the Mothers Union

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and Woman's Institute, Maudie would never take any office in these groups.

<sup>ast</sup>  
<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>at</sup>  
<sup>the</sup>  
<sup>ready</sup>  
<sup>in Monday</sup>  
<sup>Wed.</sup>  
A copious letter writer - Sunday evening was her letter writing time, after cooking the Sunday dinner, a roast then a walk of several miles with the family. Church, after tea supper and the children to bed she'd settle down to write. To her sister in laws, a friend who'd migrated to America, another one who'd gone to Australia. Lettie had also married an Australian soldier and gone to Australia but that correspondence gradually petered out.

To make ends meet, one year the infant school mistress was boarded in the front room making it very cramped quarters for the family in the rest of the house 2 bedrooms upstairs and the small kitchen. Miss Rossiter was well looked after her meals prepared and presented tastefully on trays. a fire always lit and glowing when she arrived home from school. She only required the room during the weekdays.

Later on a nursing home was opened in "Champion House" which stood on the corner opposite "Derby Cottages" Maudie obtained work there. School holidays in August Maudie and the children would walk the 2 miles to Sunningdale Station and entrance, via Windsor to Victoria Station, then Paddington Station always calling on Aunt Annie. Most summers it was down to Devon. At the end of a days travelling the family would arrive at either

South Malton, or South Malton Rd station and then walk six miles out to Warblesgh leaving the luggage to come by carrier the next day. Often a farmer's cart would pass, in the dusk, and the farmer would enquire where we were going. "Is he Charley Hamer's daughter. Come ye of with the bairns" and we'd all ride to Highdown.

Occasionally the holidays were spent at Laura Elliot's. But these were trying days as Maudie had to help three active children in order while in the house.

Maudie always took part in the school and church outings. To the sea usually Brighton when in the earlier years she would don a free to fresh costume and go in for a bathe, scandalising the other matters. To the war and science museums in London, and every Christmas, a return to the Theatre. Aunt Annie's Xmas present to the children a visit to a pantomime "Peter Pan" - "Where the Rainbow ends" or "Matter Goose".

She entered a "best ankles" contest at a local fete, and much to the delight of her children, and horror of Harry, won first prize.

Any extra money was either put in the bank or spent on the children. Clothes were mostly handouts, even her shoes, from her sister in laws. Uncle Walt's wife, Aunt Kitty was especially generous in this line giving in a way that did not offend Maudie.

who would have refused anything if offered in a charitable manner.

During this period the whole family were stricken with "Mumps". While ill herself Maude struggled on to nurse her husband and family. Eventually collapsing, her heart affected, help was obtained. Her brother, William's, new bride came up from Devon and took over the care of all the family.

A close friendship developed between sister-in-laws and new holidays to Devon always included a visit to William. Nell and her sons staying with Maude when on a visit to London.

Nell's sister Nancy also came down to Horton calling in for tea on a Sunday afternoon. She and her boyfriend, Ted would give the children rides on their tandem (Bicycle made for two) around the village green. Nancy, in short shorts, would be looked on in awe by the 1920's housewives. Harry considered her very "forward" and would get teased all the more because she knew what he thought of her.

1931. The 21st December, a cold, dry day the family moved to East Haddon. Farewelled by the vicar and various neighbours, the bus containing the family and belongings arrived in the dark cold evening to Priestwell Cottage. It was the oldest cottage in the village, built in the lath and plaster style, with a thatched roof, very picturesque but a nightmare to clean, with its flagstone floors

and damp walls. It did at least have a tap in the house, and a bath, in the scullery. The toilet was still across the yard.

Maude joined the Mather's Union and Women's Institute but it was uphill making friends in a midlands village where everyone was related and had been to the same school.

Harry was quite content to work and go for his daily beer, but that social contact was denied to women of that period.

She concentrated on her children encouraging them to read books etc. Though disappointed that her eldest son Bill, having been interrupted in a very possible successful attempt to gain an 11+ scholarship at Horton, had sat the Northampton exam, and had a recommendation, but, there being fewer scholarships in the Midlands his hopes of a grammar school education faded. The family budget would no way stretch to school fees.

Occasional trips to London, and a Women's Institute trip to Windsor. Visits from the family especial Harry's brothers, were high lights, as they organised football and cricket matches in Miss Blacklock's paddock, behind the stables.

A move over to Lilac Cottage eased things as still an old house, it was dry walled, the bath in the kitchen was enclosed, and there was a gas stove, as well as the coal range.

Nancy, now married to Ted, came on a visit, in their three wheeler car, causing

much excitement, as they took the family for rides, in the dicky seat, around the village.

Bill left school at 14 years of age, in any case that was the school leaving age. Out of her hard earned savings Maude produced fifty pounds. (Harry was earning Two Pounds ten shillings a week) to apprentice Bill to S & W, a motor firm in Northampton. In return he was given five shillings a week pocket money and was taught the mechanical and showroom side of the business. His fare into Northampton daily, with his lunches, took most of the five shillings, and he also attended night classes at the Northampton Technical College.

Maude followed her father's example, an interest in making wines, some quite potent from local ingredients. There were expeditions to pick dandelions for wine. At Horton a great favourite had been the cowslips which grew in a field near Datchet, and made a very lovely wine. Crabapples, from wild trees, made jelly. Blackberries were always garnered, they were made into jellies, jams and wines. Any surplus vegetables, parsnips especially, made a good wine. Beans were cut up and salted down in an earthenware pot. The soil around East Haddon was deep loam, and black and red currants thrived in it. So there was always jam or jelly to put on the bread and margarine, or to help flavour

pies, tarts, and puddings.

The greengrocer only came round once a week to East Haddon as everyone grew their own potatoes, vegetables, rhubarb. Very few cottages had fruit trees but those that did, shared the harvest from their trees.

and (The greengrocer soon learnt that Maude would buy any damaged fruit and browning bananas as they were practically given away.)

Aunt Annie was very amused when, Grace and Peter staying with her on one of the school holidays, were horrified when, on discovering one of the bananas she'd bought was brown, she commenced to throw it away. She was solemnly assured that was when bananas should be eaten. That was the time when she also said she'd never known Maude to lose her temper. Thereagain she was assured that it did happen occasionally.

After the early days of her marriage Maude did not know what it was to have a new dress. In her single days she had bought a hand sewing machine, Singer, of course, which she greatly prized, oiling it regularly. Miss Blacklock's handouts were unpicked and remade. The hats were refurbished with a steaming, to reshape, and addition of a feather or flower or ribbon. She loved shoes, and it was a great gift that she and Miss Blacklock took the same size shoe, so even handouts in that line were

welcomed. Sheets when beginning to wear in the middle were split down the middle and the outer edges joined after that, very often there was enough material to make pillowcases. Towels when threadbare were machined together for a second life. All rags were made into dusters.

Aunt Annie's hobby was making wool rugs, by the hook method. Uncle George would cut the wool to length, then help draw the design on the canvas. Many of these found their way into Maudie's house so she never spent her evenings making bag mats.

She belonged to the local library and always had a book to read. ~~most~~ (Sunday nights were letter writing days. Letters to brothers, cousins, friends including one in America and one in Australia a prolific correspondence was maintained.)

Walking was a favourite exercise with all the family. Sunday afternoon especially. ~~The~~ Whole families would go out, especially in the Horton days. A favourite walk being to Wraybury and along the banks of the river Thames. ~~On~~ to Colnbrook passed the inn where Dick Turpin had stayed in his highway robbery days.

At East Hadden the walks would be to Ravensthorpe and back along the main Rugby Rd, ~~to~~ to Holdenby.

Maudie never had the Sunday roast dinner cooked at the bakers, as so many



East Hadden families did, so she never went to the Sunday morning service, but always dressed and appeared at the evening service. Hat and gloves had to be worn, even by the younger girls.

After church the family would sit in the sitting room, in winter around the open fire, and play cards or other games, or just talk. The sitting room was only used on Sundays. As the children grew older, and were interested in going to the local dancing, Maudie showed them how to waltz etc. recurring memories of her dancing days.

Monday was always washing day and the sitting room was also cleaned after use on Sunday.

Ironing was done on Tuesday. The bedrooms cleaned on Wednesday and Thursday. The Kitchen on Friday and baking done on Saturday morning. Harry always insisted on a midday meal promptly at 12 MD. This was a cooked dinner so the mornings were busy but after dinner was cleared, Maudie always washed, changed from working clothes, sat down to relax, smoke a cigarette, and sew or read until it was time to get the tea English style - Bread and butter, cakes etc.

At 9pm a supper was served - Toasted cheese, Macaroni cheese or similar dish with a milk drink often cocoa.

Repeat

Maude belonged to the Hather's Union and the Women's Institute, but never accepted office in either.

She did help with the altar flowers at Horton because Miss Foster, the neighbour drew her into it. The old church at Horton had yew trees in the churchyard, grown there because, altho' necessary for the making of the bows, made famous by the yeomen of England, they were poisonous to farm animals. The Manor, set in a pleasant park, a Georgian building, had once housed Milton the poet, when he became blind.

The church at East Haddon was also old, dating from Norman times with the manor behind all surrounding by a stone wall, the village houses clustering along and outside the wall.

Repeat

Maude was a devote C of E. member going to Holy Communion every festive Sunday and to evening service every Sunday. There was little else to do in the village. Harry rarely went to church.

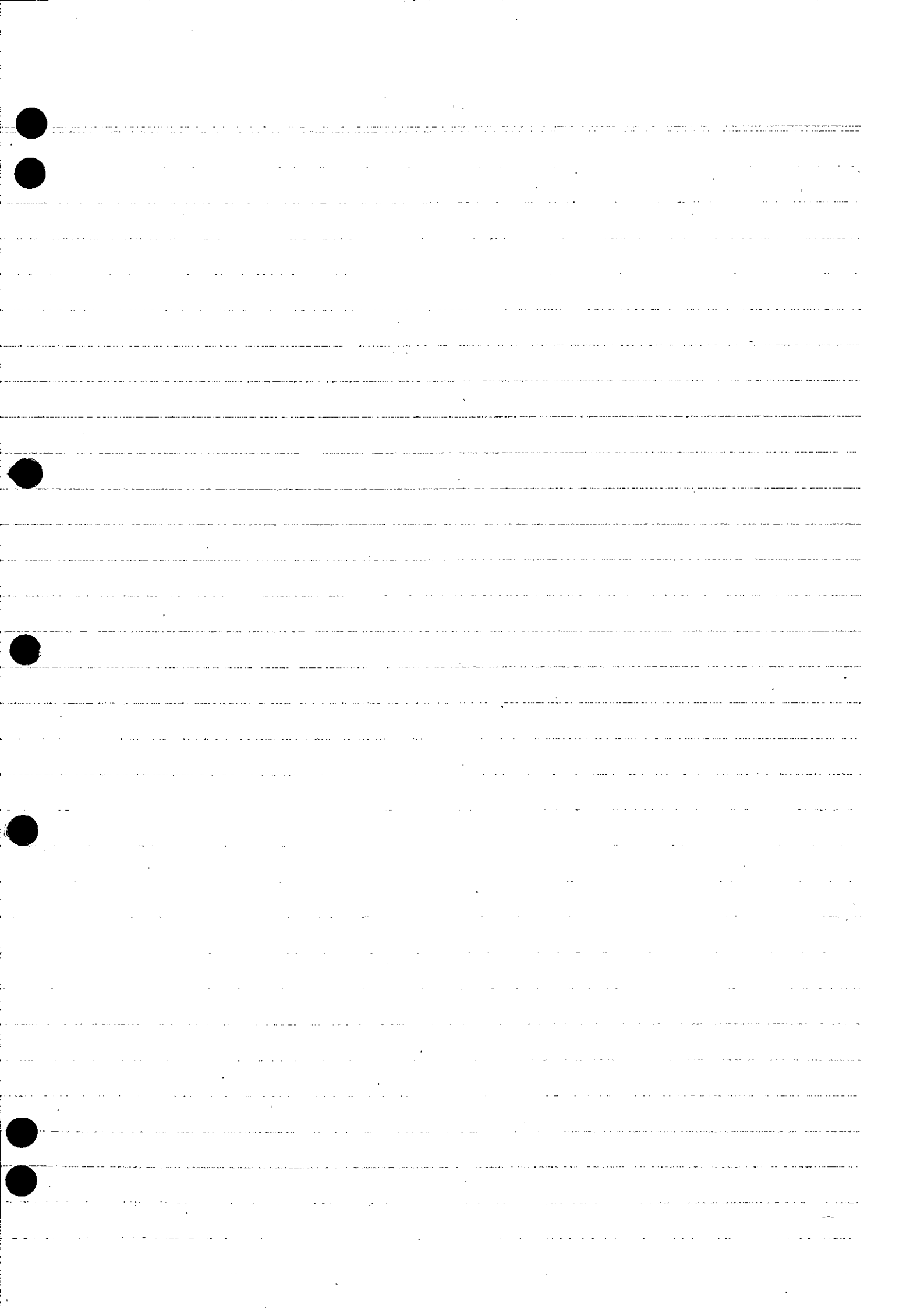
By 1942. Bill Harry died 1941. Peter had joined the R.A.F. and Grace entered the Nursing Profession. East Haddon became unbearable to Harry & Maude. so they moved. Maude went for a while, to Devon. She stayed with Aunt Annie ~~for~~ at South Molton but evidently Aunt Annie considered it very wrong for Husband and wife to be separated so she returned to Camberley where Harry

was captaining a house for Miss Blacklock.

After a while they moved to another job at a house near the Camberly golf club. There Maudie became friendly with an elderly spinster, whose was housekeeper to a retired Army man living nearby. She was an interesting woman knew all the fungi abounding in the local woods, which was edible etc. Harry always said she was an old witch.

The next move was to Chobham, where they lived in a tiny two bedroomed lodge house. Here Maudie occasionally helped in the big house.

The war ending in 1945, and building restarted Miss Blacklock bought two new houses on an estate at Trimley. The two bedroomed one she kept for herself, and offered the three bedroomed house to Maudie and Harry on condition that when she was in residence Maudie would look after her and that Harry attended the gardens. Also when she couldn't obtain maids for her London flat Maudie would also go up there. The house was rent free and it was modern. Maudie was very happy to accept and as they had the old age pension it was an adequate arrangement. Also Maudie welcomed the trips to London as Miss Blacklock often gave her tips to the theatre. Harry hated London.



## My MEMORIES

I was finishing the memories of my mother but found I could not write about her death. I was present & in the room, but asleep. It was traumatic to find she had slipped away while I slept soundly. When I mentioned this to Anika's father. - His wife had died in the bed while he slept. - he was angry and told me never to expect to be able to turn the clock back as we'd probably do exactly the same things.

Sometimes I wonder if my first memory was my birth as, for years, I had a dream where I'd be struggling to get out of a tight tunnel. I was born at home, a difficult second stage, as the delivery was P.O.P. My father was away on his cycle trying to get the midwife who was away on another case. Father was also having trouble with his haemorrhoids, and during the labour, had complained bitterly to my mother of the pain he was suffering. I never did learn if the midwife arrived on time or if I was delivered by a neighbour. My elder brother was staying with the matron of the local cottage hospital. \*The telephone was a luxury then.

My next memory was lying in the big hooded pram and being annoyed that I couldn't see anything.

In the 1920. very few people ~~owned~~ cars, those who did usually were able to employ a chauffeur, and the telephone was also only in the homes of the 'well to do' and some business people. The bicycle was the working man's mode of transport when he didn't work, and a few intrepid women could ride, and even

bicycles. My mother had one before she married, but evidently gave it up then. She also possessed a Singer sewing machine which worked by turning the handle. It was still working when she died, having been oiled yearly.

I was christened at Hardenhuish Church the only round church in England. In those days it stood on a hill, surrounded by iron railing, a white church in the middle of green fields.

By the age of two years, now having a younger brother of 6 months, we moved to Horton, Bucks.

Here the memories turn —

Sedate Sunday afternoon walks with the family along the road to Wragbury, or to Colnbrook, to view, with awe, an old cottage in the main street where Dick Turpin was reputed to have stayed. In the summer or spring we'd walk down to the river but rarely picniced.

Every Sunday we went to the church for the morning service. Few trees grew in the churchyard and we knew they had helped supply the archers with their bows at Agincourt. Milton the poet had lived in the local manor when he was blind. The Duchess of York (the present Queen Mother) had an Aunt living nearby — obviously a recluse as her house was dark and dismal. Among the children of the village she had a witch like image and came to church in bedraggled clothes, a drab fur stole and laddered stockings. Years later, while nursing at Bexley Park Hospital during the war, Queen Wilhelmina of the Dutch, came to visit some Dutch officers at the hospital. She gave me the same

impression - bedraggled clothes but with no stockings.

The church owned some beautiful barness as our next door neighbour, a Miss Foster, was a wonderful needlewoman. She gave classes, and as a special favour to my mother, I was allowed to join them. I didn't learn much as she insisted I sew with my right hand. To show her I could do just as well with my left hand I stitched a gaudy sampler of butterflies and flowers on an old piece of linen, with thread obtained from her.

After hours of painstaking work curled up in a chair near the window I showed to my mother who proudly showed it to Miss Foster. "Was it done with the right hand?" No. Then it's no good!!

There were no more needlework classes.

But I was the one asked to accompany Miss Foster when the vicar offered his gooseberries to the church funds if somebody could pick them. We crouched under those bushes for many an hour picking gooseberries, getting pinched hands while she endeavoured to improve my mind.

On holidays we walked for miles, without our parents, over the fields, always mindful that one looked both ways before crossing the railway line, and didn't go near the electrified line. We knew that if one put one's ear on a railway line a train could be sensed coming. We knew the poisoned berries, that dock leaves rubbed where the stinging nettles had stung soothed the area.

We fished for frog spawn in the stream up the lane, bringing a jar full home to watch them turn into tadpoles. Later we'd try to catch

the tiddler fish in a jamjar, tied around the neck with a piece of string. but I wasn't very keen on that pastime as the leeches clung to ones legs if one stepped into the water.

My special friends were Muriel King, who lived with her mother, sister and ex soldier father in a converted messen hut at the end of the lane.

Of course all our fathers were ex servicemen, all had their old khaki overcoats and trousers. Most couldn't afford any other clothes.

Eileen Chandler had several brothers and sisters. Her mother was asthmatic but I was allowed into the bedroom one special day, to Eileen's ~~new~~ newborn brother. Her father bred wirehaired terriers, but we were never allowed near them as they were reputedly vicious. In any case I was a very timid child and dogs frightened me although they always seemed to like me. The big dogs, at the house where my father stabled Miss Beedington's horse, always came rushing forward to greet and lick me while I'd stand and scream. My father put me on one of the hunters which immediately reared up, frightened by my white shirt, and that was the beginning and end of my dealings with the horses.

Eileen, Muriel and I spent many hours weaving houses out of the reeds beside the lane, and playing in them. We didn't play with dolls. I had one which I'd had as a Xmas present from our childless neighbours. One wet Xmas morning I was carried over to their back door by my father, and presented with the doll. It had a china head, and rag body, and its home was a shoe



box at the foot of my bed. One day my mother dropped something and smashed the head. She met me coming home from school and was almost tearful about it. I sensed I was supposed to feel very hurt about it but I wasn't really all that fond of the doll, though Father spent hard earned money getting it a new head.

Our house only having two bedrooms I had a single bed near the window so was able to lie in bed and watch the wind blow through the Elm tree, which stood in the middle of the village green. My brothers shared a double bed. In the winter when father was away with the hunters, I shared my mother's bed. Just before we left Horton my mother had applied for one of the new council houses, as the principle was girls of eleven and over should not sleep in the same bedroom as their brothers — one of the criterions enabling one to be eligible for a council house.

A few doors away from us the Harris family lived in a house built against the wall of the public house. It was small but I never went inside. We were not allowed to mix with them as the children were always the ones the school nurse ordered home to have their hairs shaved and treated because of hair lice. I can't remember how many Harris boys there were, but the girls were. Constance, Hope, Faith and Charley. Mrs Harris always seemed to have a baby in her arms.

A Friday night ritual was to put ones head on a newspaper spread over Father's lap while our hair was fine toothed combed, then washed. Our only tap was outside, shared by

5 households. The water for the weekly bath was boiled in the copper which was built in beside the kitchen range - fuelled by coal. Our hip bath was kept under the stairs cupboard. We were better lit up in the winter than many families as we had an Aladdin lamp. It gave a much brighter light than the ordinary oil lamp but was more delicate as the mesh mantle easily shattered. We also possessed a gramophone and a set of nursery rhyme recording. It was a great honour to be allowed to wind up the gramophone.

Another great asset was that we possessed a set of Arthur Mee's Encyclopaedia's, how mother had managed to afford them I don't know. I can never remember her having a new dress. We were encouraged to use the books, and were expected to write letters especially thank-you ones, to Aunt's cousins and other folk.

If we were given a penny for running an errand for any neighbour we could spend a 2d on sweets but a 2d would have to go into one's money box, which when full was put into the Post Office saving bank.

A box of plain cracker biscuits was always kept full. Any other sort of biscuit was a luxury, and a jar of plain boiled sweets was kept on the shelf one given as a reward for being exceptional good. A 2d in those days could buy a liquorice stick my favourite, or a bag of aniseed buns.

Before I degress too much from neighbours another near one was <sup>Phyllis</sup> ~~Andrew~~. She was in her teens - knew where babies came from and told me, from a tulip kept on the window sill until it opened,

Later on she intrigued all of us by demonstrating how she danced the Charleston and black bottom. Years later I learn she married young and died in childbirth.

One of our many walks during the school holidays was along the market garden fields, here we'd pull up a turnip, and wash it in the stream then eat it but we never paddled in that stream, it was dark and muddied. The spinney on the other side was a delightful place. Here dog violets grew in the spring, and we collected hazelnuts in the Autumn.

I started school at 4 years of age because my eldest brother wanted me to go with him. Then my younger brother started school just as I was promoted to a desk. He cried so much I was returned to sit with him at the small tables, and was highly disgusted.

I can remember learning to knit, making socks on four steel needles. We sat around the fire in the classroom. My socks grew more slowly and I was mystified why as I was knitting as well as my friends until one confided her mother did a bit for her during the evenings. I always loved reading and would sit for hours reading whatever came to hand. Mother was given a whole batch of women's magazines 'Hornet Stories'. They were full of romantic stories, very simple, no sex just idealised love, and I read everything in them. Two years running I won a school prize. The first year I was given 'Just a Jolly Girl' which didn't catch my imagination, but the next year my prize was 'Little Women' and L. Alcott's enthralled me. My birthday and Xmas presents from then on were the L. Alcott books.

Every year, during the spring by some magical grapevine, we knew the daughter of the family at Horton Manor, was celebrating her birthday. The village were each given a penny if a bouquet of flowers was presented to her while she sat, like a queen in state on a chair at the top of the entrance hall. Someone would always know and off we'd go across the fields to collect a bunch of lady's smocks, buttercups, kingcups or may flower, and trudge up the drive to the manor. It was worth it to get that penny.

Except for my brothers I had little to do with boys. I can remember one, his name was Leslie standing at our gate and every time I went to go out he'd pull faces and threaten to pull my hair. Mother would not interfere, so I didn't go out.

My hair was long and fair, my father's joy, so I was not allowed to have it cut, in the style of twenties. To tease me the boys only had to pull my hair. In our history lessons at school, when the teachers wanted to demonstrate the difference between the Saxons and Normans, I was always chosen as the Saxon. Because I had fair hair and blue eyes. I always hated mental arithmetic when we had to stand up, beside our desks and the teacher would shoot problems at us one by one. Because our school was in the Slough district the Horlicks factory donated Horlicks together with an urn to heat up our milk for morning tea. Girls were allotted the duty of mixing the horlicks, the boys filled the urn. I loved the horlicks but many of the children turned their noses up at it, though the teachers supervised us while drinking it. We all went home for a midday meal. Had an afternoon tea of bread and jam, cake on Sunday, at 4.30pm, and a light

suffer before going to bed. which would be a baked potato. — scrambled egg, macaroni cheese, or similar dish. The coal range heated the house during the winter, so the oven was always hot, ready to make dishes. In the summer an oil stove usually a primus, was used to boil the kettle etc. and we ate lots of salads, grown in the garden.

Altho my father was away all the winter he always seemed to have to do the communal jobs of the houses, like cleaning out the drain. Perhaps the other men defrosted the tap during the winter.

Our sewerage was by bucket collected by horse & cart once a week and transported to the sewerage farm at Datchet. We always stayed inside the house while the "stink" man came thro' the village. Dressed in his khaki coat shirt & trousers — probably having seen service on the "Western Front" he collected the open buckets and poured them into a drum like cart.

We had a tally cat, Tom the first.

He came in at nights, he was neutered and when we went out, ~~was~~ shut up in the coal shed. We all loved him very much and it was a sad day when he died in agony, suspectedly poisoned.

Our greatest outings were up to London to visit Aunt Annie. whose Xmas present was a visit to the pantomime. We saw "Peter Pan" "Around the Rainbow" each presented yearly at a London theatre "Matter Goose" and "Cinderella". Part of the fun was queuing up to enter the upper gallery, "the gods", and being entertained by the buskers. We didn't get wet even if the rains came down as all the theatres had canopies over the pavement by the gallery entrance. We also visited Selfridges or Gamage's. we were allowed

to select the shop, to see Teller Xmas and then go outside in the street to see the decorations along the shop facade which, were always spectacular.

In the summer we'd be taken to Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens, to see the Peter Pan statue and the fairy tree.

I can only remember one trip to the seaside while at Horton. We sat in big charabancs. The hoods were down as it was a fine day. On the way down to Brighton we stopped at the Halfway Inn for morning tea. We children had our lemonade and sandwiches beside the duck pond.

On arriving at Brighton we paddled. My mother put on her neck to knee swimsuit, considered very daring by the other mothers and went into the water. I cannot remember the return journey.

Another outing was to the war museum. It was for the boys, but because Mother was to help look after the party I was allowed to go. I hated the guns etc. and disgraced myself by being sick into the fountain whilst everyone was having lunch.

My brothers loved to read and hear stories of the Great War but I hated it and wept tears at each Armistice Service held each year at the War memorial, under the elm tree, when the names of all the fallen were read out.

When the snow came a great recreation was a ice slide prepared by the lugger boys on the local stream, which had ice over. We were allowed along it while the boys rested.

I had a short spell playing netball, but

although ~~beak~~ was never tall enough to be a credit to the team.

I also went for swimming lessons in the baths at Wraypleury - in the River. It was always freezing cold - I took half the lesson getting in, then had to cling to the side as couldn't reach bottom until one of the older girls or the teacher attempted to give me a lesson. I was the youngest participant as swimming was not considered an elegant necessity by other parents.

As I was always grazing my ankles I was taken to a shoe shop in Windsor, where a supposedly children's specialist recommended I wear boots - only boys wore boots in the 'twenties. I was horrified - but a compromise was obtained. I wore metal arches in laced up shoes. I can only remember having about one pair of shoes a year and they were resoled and re-heeled frequently, often by my father.

Aunt Annie made me a 'best' dress one year as my birthday present. I was allowed to pick the pattern I liked out of a book, so I picked the yellow dress. On my birthday Aunt presented me with a pink dress. I was disappointed, and must have shown it as she never made me another dress.

Our summer holidays were usually spent at Granddad's home. "Highdown", Washleigh, N. Devon. It was a few miles from South Molton. We'd travel up to London have dinner, with Aunt Annie and then catch the train to Devon. One railway line ran to Barnstaple. and South Molton Station was

the destination, South Malton Road Station was on the other line. Workleigh situated centrally between, so either station meant a long walk after our journey. We always enjoyed the Devon holiday. Once we'd risen from our feather beds, I shared beds with Mather, and been driven out onto the veranda to pump a bowl of ice cold water up - we were suppose to strip to the waist and have a wash, It was very often a skimpy on, before breakfast. Our daily job was to collect the eggs. which meant passing the bee hives, knocking the broody hens off the nests, and hoping the goose would be looking elsewhere, he often chased me. After that we were free to roam the fields and lanes climbing along the tall hedges, playing explorers, eating the wild strawberries and blackberries. We also played with the two boys from the dairy farm. where their grandmother always insisted we drank a cup of milk straight from the cow. Those boys also loved eating raw potatoes.

A great ceremony was the harvesting of the last field. The whole village turned out, the women with sandwiches cakes and drinks, the men with their guns. As the cutter went round the last swathe of corn the rabbits and hares would rush out to be shot. Everyone went home with at least, a brace of rabbits.

On Barnstaple market day a bus did the rounds, collecting everyone with their wares. Granny always went in with the eggs, & several plucked chicken and ducks. We enjoyed wandering around the market, A particular treat were the black sweet cherries delicious to eat but leaving a dark purple stain on one's hands, face & clothes.



Back at Horton my other friend was Sheila Brown. She was the middle daughter of the local shop owner. Their grandparents ran the local bakery and the shop until their son was old enough to take over. The older Browns lived in an attractive old house with a large garden, behind the old shop. Behind the house were enormous sheds that housed the flour etc. Sheila, with her younger sister & I, had hours of fun climbing & playing among the sacks. The sisters all went to private schools so I never have understood why I was allowed to play with them.

Horton School consisted of three rooms. The infants, middle grade & senior classrooms. Each teacher had to cope with 3 grades. The boys and girls playground was divided by a fence, the boys entering the school thro' their cloakroom on the left of the building, the girls on the right. We must have been taught well. I was reading "Little Women" at 8 yrs of age and knew all the time tables, rivers etc of England but dates always eluded me. We'd be set a poem to learn over the weekend, to be recited before class on Monday morning. Music and drawing were not considered necessary for working class students.

I was 10 years old when we moved up to East Haddon, a midland village.

At the local school I enjoyed the classes, but at 11 years of age slipped behind in my work. All good pupils sat at the back at the class and it was some time before it was discovered I was short sighted, so could not see the blackboard from the back of the class. After eye testing, which entailed a trip to Northampton, and drops inserted in my eyes, so that on the way home,

I had to cling to Mother's arm unable to see much. I was fitted with round silver framed glasses, which I hated but wore, because the world suddenly became clearer. I was excluded from needlework classes but allowed to knit, to prevent straining my eyes, and was promptly nicknamed 'Granny' by the boys. This was the year I should have sat for the grammar school scholarship but no one worried as females were not considered suitable for higher education.

When in the upper class the boys were taught Algebra I asked to join the class but my request was ridiculed as unnecessary for a girl's education. Even my best friend Joan, couldn't understand why I wanted to learn.

Always a great reader. I had won books at Hoxton School. "Just a jolly girl" then "Little Women" which I loved. Thereafter my birthday and Xmas presents were books by L.A. Alcott.

We always had to write thank you letters for presents from Aunts & Uncles. Miss Blacklock. Her Xmas present was always a book to each child. Can never remember Miss Beddington sending any presents but we always received Salmon, Rabbits haggis etc from Miss Blacklock, when she spent his holiday in Scotland. These came by post, the rabbits with just a label around their necks.

Mum's friend in America always sent bundles of comics, gleaned from the American newspapers, but we loved them.

I can only remember two birthday parties. <sup>Beth & Marion</sup> One was Bill's in winter, when we roasted chestnuts on the sitting room fire at Hoxton,

and then he stood on a chair while we all danced around him singing 'Billy Boy'.

The other one was an invitation to a party for one of the children at the Manor House. Bill split an ink bottle over the floor the day before so, as a punishment, was not allowed to go. The ladies, at the Manor House, were a jovial men and helped make the party go. We had 'wafer thin' sandwiches and jelly and cakes, and I was allowed to take some cakes home to Bill.

Each year May day was celebrated at Earl Haddon. The school children all dressing up and parading the village. All cars, there weren't many were stopped, and any money collected went towards the fund to finance our trips to school sports and music competitions.

The May Queen was voted in by all the school. I had to wait till I was thirteen and my turn came. I was so excited. Mum found a piece of white satin in her box of scraps and made me a gown, decorating it with a few diamonds. On

my nursing years. Ed & Alison were it when she came home on nights off from training.

I left school in 1935 age 14 yrs.

My first job was at a cafe in Northampton, my duties, to help clear the tables make sandwiches and put the cakes on the plates. One job was to wash down the butter. It was put in the mixer with water — the first time I did that job I turned the mixer on full of making the kitchen and all in it. The cafe failed so did my job. Not really knowing what I wanted to do, and knowing I had to earn some money I took a job as head of all work at a house in Northampton. My friend Joan was already helpfully working in a similar situation but I hated it and disliked the woman I worked for so didn't last a week.

Mrs Blacklock then said her friend's in, near Canterbury Surrey, needed a kitchenmaid. I agreed to go so was fitted with dress and apron, and sent off. I found my working companions agreeable & there was an angular red haired woman, was the

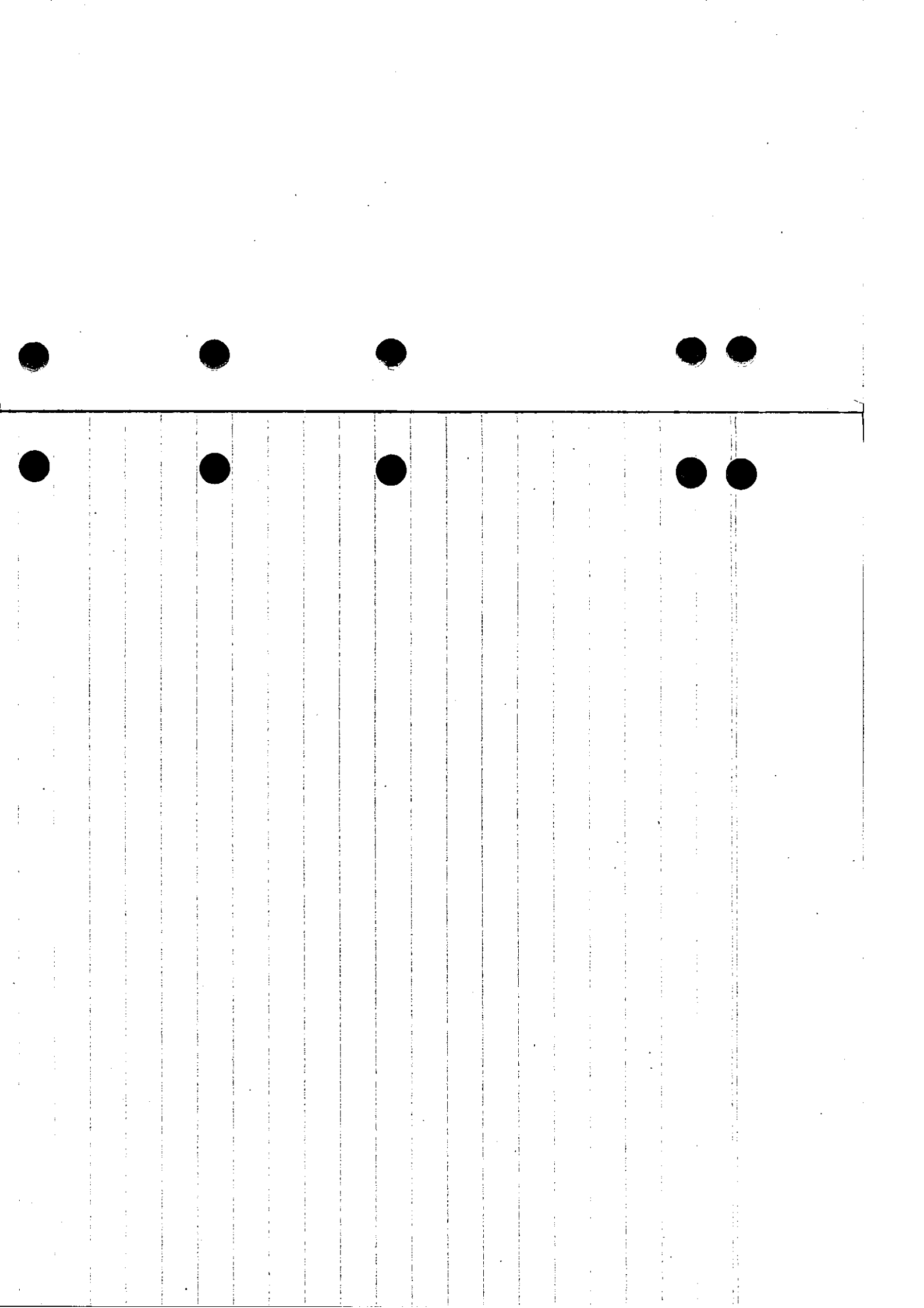
as the buses were inconvenient. I often cycled into Canterbury leaving the bike at a cycle shed, 14. for the afternoon. While I went shops being on to the pictures, on my own as I knew nobody of my own age. I got a ticket for the local dramatic Society's show "The Desert Song" and for days after the theme song haunted me.

I bought "The Picturegoer", a magazine about the film stars, each week. In those days I knew all the film stars, and weekly I'd send it off, with a letter, to Kath Phillips, my friend at the Red Lion Hotel in Earl Huddon. She corresponded with a magazine and letter. Suddenly I wrote home each week, and had a letter in return. I belonged to the library and read anything that came my way. This while raining at 6 AM every morning, winter and summer. My first job in the morning was to start the boiler it was a central-heating stove and I often had trouble with it, but soon found I could call on the gardener to get it going for me. Then I was supposed to scrub the front steps.

were glad to go to bed. The household consisted of Captain Bald a retired naval captain, he kept a chicken farm as a hobby. Mrs Bald, she was tall, thin and very quietly spoken, and her daughter from a previous marriage - the only person in the house I didn't like, the three were the same age. She was a snob. Then a much younger boy and girl. They lived at the top of the house, with the housemaid in the nursery quarters. One of my jobs was to carry the meals up to the nursery. I shared a bedroom with the housemaid but it was a bright airy room, on the nursery floor with a lovely outlook from the big windows. The staff had their weekly bath in the nursery bathroom. The all washed and changed before our afternoon rest session.

Flora was an efficient but plain cook so I didn't learn any fancy cooking.

I had a month's holiday each year, on pay, I think I earned £12 a year, while the family with the ~~father~~ Flora and Clare took a small





Written by Grace TURNBULL nee SIMS, Cousin to  
Charles HARRIS

My mother always spoke of the family bible  
in the hands of Richard Carter Seaman, who  
lived in Portsmouth.

Mum was sent there when her Mother  
Elizabeth nee Carter died. She longed to  
look at the family <sup>tree</sup> but was told by her Aunt  
that family trees should be of no interest to  
girls so was only able to sneak a few  
items from it which she recorded in her bible.

Charles William CARTER died on board  
HMS BLANCHE April 21st 1875 age 18 years

~~William H~~

WILLIAM HARRIS died at South Malton

Feb 11th 1893 age 77 (was he Charles's &  
my great grandfather?)

Emma CARTER died at SD Hill Sussex Oct 12th  
18 - age 74

Elizabeth HARRIS nee CARTER died at South Malton  
Aug 18th 1904 age 41. (Our grandmother)

Charles Frederick HARRIS died at Tring, Surrey  
Dec 23rd 1948 age 84. (Our grandfather)

Elizabeth and Charles married at  
ROMANSleigh Church (?Devon) by Rev. S WADE  
March 27th 1888

Grandmother Elizabeth taught at OXHAM  
school before she married. Did I send  
you a copy of her photo (a group & we're  
not sure which one is Elizabeth. & now  
there's nobody left to tell us). If you haven't  
got the photo I'd get copies made & send to  
you.

Ruth. Cousin Arthur's sister. Believe  
she's still alive might help, tho' she always  
insists her father said Elizabeth was alcoholic.  
She lived at South Malton Hotel, and that was how



My Mother always spoke of 2 brothers CARTER,  
who were French seamen wrecked on the Devon  
Shores who married 2 Devon sisters  
& owned a public house & did a bit of  
smuggling.

Mum's grandmother also was known  
as a midwife for the district, Untrained, of course

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VANISHING CORNWALL

by Daphne du Maurier

Penguin Books, 1972